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ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP

Date 10-3-83

TX 6386

TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post) *Superfund*

1. *Sam Nott, Enforcement Section GAW-SEA*

2. *Gerald Fontenot, Enforcement Section GAW-HE*

3. *Charles Garza, Emergency Response Br. GES-E*

4. *Del Krebbiel, OSHA Compliance, Central Place, Suite 230, 1425 W. Pioneer, Irving, TX*

Action	Title	Note and Return
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As Requested	For Correction	Prepare Reply
Circulate	For Your Information	See Me
Comment	Investigate	Signature
Coordination	Justify	

Initials: *DH: Dennis Guild*

File *75061*

REMARKS

*This is a citizens complaint received from:*

*(b) (6)*

*It involves both environmental and safety issues.*

DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, concurrences, disposals, clearances, and similar actions

FROM: (Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post)

Room No.—Bldg.

*Phil Crocher GES-SH*

Phone No.

*767-9775*

5041-102

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SUPERFUND FILE

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The situation that I am writing about and concerned with occurred at <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ ~~Master~~ ~~Corp.~~ 1215 W. Crosby, Carrollton, Tx.

I am an employee of Grandfoot Masonry Contr. and we have a contract to dig six (6) tanks out of the ground and to pour a concrete pit which I suppose will house the new tanks.

We began to dig on Wednesday morning Sept. 28, 1983. The tanks are connected to an underground concrete tunnel by a plastic (PVC type) pipe. By being connected to the tunnel I mean only that the pipes run through the side walls but inside the tunnel they have been capped off. The two tanks that I am specifically concerned with are made of steel ~~concrete~~ holding app. 2000-3000 gallons. There are four pipes for each tank going inside the tunnel.

The first step in removing the tanks was to go into the tunnel to check the necessary procedure in releasing the pipes from the walls of the tunnel. Inside this tunnel are patches of thick green slime with a mold like substance growing on it.

~~There are~~ There are hoses ~~to~~ lying in the bottom of this tunnel that are falling apart. The only way to describe the smell is to say that it smells like "chemicals."

There was no way to disconnect the pipes from the tanks from inside the tunnel. The job engineer (name?) said we would have to dig down and cut the pipes from outside.

The backhoe operator was able to dig on three sides of each tank but the distance between the

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tanks and the tunnel walls was not wide enough for his shovel. This had to be dug out by hand. I shoveled ~~the dirt~~ <sup>this dirt</sup> out down to the connecting pipes <sup>cleared dirt away from pit with hands</sup> and cut the pipes with a diamond blade saw. This took at least four (4) hours and I think maybe longer. While in this pit there was a strong "chemical" odor. After breaking one of these pipes loose, a glob of thick dark colored slime came out of at least one pipe. Since we were continually working down there we were naturally exposed to this substance. While cutting the pipe I was breathing the smoke of not only the pipe but any residue that may have been left inside.

The soil around one tank was basically dry. While digging towards the pipes the soil would cave in to the point that one had to dig well back from the line of the pipes. ~~I say this to point out the contrast to the second tank.~~ I say this to point out the contrast to the second tank. The soil was so damp and moist that I was able to dig a cave in to and around the pipes without the soil above caving in. I feel this dampness was not caused by water since the two tanks were only three (3) feet apart.

Throughout the day, Mr. Fred Norton, whom I was told was in charge of the chemical portion of master where we were working, and the job engineer spent several hours watching us work. Even though I had dirt on me literally from head to toe none ever mentioned the possibility of being exposed to a dangerous substance. There was talk among us ~~workers~~ workers at various times about why the tanks were being dug up and how we may not use the same soil to fill some

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of the holes up because it may be "contaminated." In our ignorance we did not really associate the term "contaminated" with the seriousness that I now feel we should have. At one point my left eye began to burn and I just thought "I got some of that junk in it." It soon stopped burning and I thought nothing else of it. It is a common occurrence for us to get sweat or something in our eyes on "regular" construction jobs, so the association of this burning sensation and possible danger never crossed my mind. I just pull my shirt up to wipe my eye, never realizing what may be on my shirt.

I don't remember at what point my arms began to have a burning, stinging, itchy sensation but about three o'clock (3:00pm) I happened to be standing beside Mr. Norton. I said to him "What do you have in those tanks. It sure does itch." I was rubbing my arm when I said this. He immediately became concerned and began to question me about which tank I was around that caused me to burn. I couldn't answer that question because I had been working around both tanks. He seemed more concerned about tank #2 (I call it that because it was the second tank that we removed). He said that tank held a poison that could be absorbed through the skin. We would have to go to the nurse's station. Again in my ignorance I complained about that and tried to tell him that it didn't burn that bad. He called my boss over and told him that he couldn't allow me to leave the premises without a check up. He said he had to make a phone call and that he would be

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back in a moment. While he was gone I explained to my boss that it didn't hurt so much and that I didn't feel it necessary to go to the first aid station. My <sup>boss</sup> said I would have to go but, "Don't tell him that I've been down there or I'll have to go too" he said.

When Mr. Norton got back he began to question my boss ~~about~~ about the other workers who were already gone. He told ~~me~~ him to tell them to take a shower and wash really well if they began to feel this burning or stinging. He then told me "Mr. Bower you are going to be indisposed for a while. You are going to get a shower. We may have to keep your clothes but we will furnish you something to wear home." While walking to the nurses' station with him I again asked him what was in the tanks. He said "Oh, just some solvents." When we reached the nurses station he ~~explained~~ explained the situation using the terms "chemicals" and "acid." My treatment was to hold my hands and arms under running water for thirty (30) minutes. ~~In~~ In a few moments two men came into the room and asked me how I was, etc. One of the men when talking about the "stuff" ~~in~~ in the tanks used the term "that's some bad shit." The other agreed. ~~They~~ They were there for only a minute or so. After the treatment a nurse gave me a Muster Request for Service form with a note on it saying, "Should seek outside med. help if problem continues." I asked her what was in the tanks but she didn't know.

After returning to the job site one of the men that had visited me at the first aid station was standing there watching the back hoe operator lift ~~one~~ one of the tanks (#2) out of the hole.

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I found out that he was a safety inspector.

As the tank was being lifted it caught on a metal (steel) pipe that was crossing the pit. Mr. Norton, Mr. Crowfoot, the job engineers, the safety inspector and myself were standing there. I suggested we use the diamond blade saw and cut the pipe. Since the metal blade would cause sparks cutting the metal pipe the question of an explosion arised. The safety inspector asked Mr. Norton what "was in there" Mr. Norton looked at the tanks and said Phenol and Chlorobenzine. The safety inspector said it would be okay so long as the valves were shut off. Mr. Crowfoot cut the pipe. The forklift operator and myself then moved it. Nothing was said about wearing gloves or taking other safety measures. That was the first work day.

As I was going home I realized that I had that dirt in my hair. When I got home I called a friend and explained the day at work. Since I don't have a shower she was concerned about me sitting in the bath water with that residue. She asked me to come to her house and take a shower but I decided that I would just hold my head under the faucet and wash the dirt out of my hair. The water ran down over my face and my eyes, nose, ears and mouth began to burn. I then decided to go take a shower. Later in the night the burning and itching was worse and about midnight I was contemplating going to the emergency room. By this time I was angry that no one ~~warned~~ warned me of the possible hazards of digging ~~around~~ around these tanks. I was worried about breathing these fumes all day. My throat was sore, I was feeling light headed and the top of my head felt

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as if it wasn't there.

The next day Thursday, Sept. 29, 1983, I went to work determined to get some answers about what I'd been in the day before. The job engineer came over and I ~~asked~~ told him about the restless night. I asked him what was in the tanks. He didn't really know but he thought it was just some "solvents." They use the word solvent as if it is no more than hand soap or something. I told him that I was mad and that I wanted to talk to someone who knew what I had on me. He said that Mr. Norton would know and that he would ask him to come talk to me. When he left I went to the backhoe operator and asked him if he burned anywhere last night. He said that he went home and took a long shower but when he got up this morning his left eye burned really bad. The skin around the eye was very red.

The job engineer came back in just a few minutes and said Mr. Norton would be in a meeting today but that he would talk to me tomorrow. He then suggested that I go over and talk to the nurse and she would answer my questions. I told him that the nurse didn't know anything because I had asked her yesterday while I was at the station. I then told him that someone should have at least warned me that there was possible danger in digging around those tanks. He did not have very much to say.

Today they are digging up a 12,000 gallon fiberglass tank that supposedly held only distilled water. Mr. Prandfoot and a Mexican laborer did the necessary hard digging that was needed. When the ~~20~~ hole was dug to the bottom of the tank there was

A puddle of liquid in the hole. Even though it was very foamy it was said that it was only water. I did ~~no~~ carpenter work that day and stayed away from this hole.

Friday Sept. 30, 1983 I was even more determined to get some answers. I wanted to know if I needed medical attention. Will there be any long term affects?

The hole that had been dug yesterday had more water in it and the foam was thicker on top of the water. Mr. Proudfoot said there were three more of these large tanks to be removed and that he also wanted to know ~~the~~ the danger that may be involved. He was particularly worried about the last tank to be removed. He said it had been in the ground 10 or 12 years and no one knew what condition it was in or exactly what it had contained. P. Mestek employee had mentioned that tank Wednesday and said it ~~leaked~~ <sup>leaked</sup> at ~~9000~~ 9000 gallons.

The job engineer was here for a few minutes this morning but he seemed to be avoiding me. ~~I~~ I made no attempt to talk to him because he had told me yesterday that Mr. Norton would see me today. Mr. Norton was in a meeting <sup>again</sup>. Mr. Proudfoot tried to get in touch with ~~Mr. Norton~~ ~~but he was not available to reach him. He seemed to be in a meeting also.~~ ~~Someone that knew the name of the safety inspector that had been on the site after I visited the nurses station on Wednesday. I don't know whom he called but I assumed it was Mr. Norton. After waiting for over an hour I suggested to Mr. Proudfoot~~

that I go to the nurses station and ask if they knew the inspectors name. He said to ask them the name of the safety engineer. The nurse said his name was Don Riddle. She called him and he asked me to come to his office. When I arrived I saw that it was not the same man. Mr. Riddle said he had heard nothing of the situation, and asked me to tell him about it. I explained ~~what had~~ what had happened and that I wanted to know for sure what was in the tanks. A Mr. Wittaker overheard us talking and joined the conversation. He is the safety manager at Mestek over the OSHA controlled sections of safety. I told them that I ~~overheard~~ overheard Mr. Norton tell the safety inspector that the tanks contained Phenol and Chlorobenzene and I wanted to know the dangers of these substances. ~~They~~ They said Phenol is harmless and that no one knew exactly what is in tank #2 but it was a mixture of many chemicals. There was absolutely nothing to worry about with the small amount of ~~exp~~ exposure that I had. There could be no danger ~~of~~ from bacteria that may have grown in the soil. I said that I would let my doctor be the judge of that if someone would just tell me the name of those chemicals. Mr. Norton's name came up as a possibility of knowing but they said he got excited if he saw a name of dangerous chemical and that he wouldn't think of the small percentage, etc. etc. They covered all the angles and I am still not satisfied with their answers. Mr. Wittaker called Mr. Norton and this is the contents of the tanks according to them.

Phenol less than 25%  
1,2,3 and 1,2,4  
trichlorobenzene  
and  
sulfonic acid      c. 15%  
sulfonic acid      c. 15%  
1455 than  
25%

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He said this was nothing but 7120, as if that would soothe all my worries.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
I mentioned to them that I had a couple of sores on my hand that has gotten inflamed since I was in contact with that soil. Mr. Witherer said that he forgot to tell me that an open sore would get worse for a few days after contact but that it would then begin to heal normally.

After going back to the jobsite Mr. Proudfoot said that he had ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ gotten in touch with Mr. Norton and <sup>Mr. Norton</sup> was going to call him back with a list of the ingredients that were in the tanks. When Mr. Norton did call he told Mr. Proudfoot that I had the list. It was the ~~the~~ ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ 7120 list.

I feel that there was too much dodging and too many people not knowing for the answer to be so simple and so harmless that Mr. Witherer copied it out of a book. He said this answer was ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ available to the public so he copied it and give it to me. I asked him to sign it but he refused. He said "That would make it legal, and I would have to <sup>involve</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ the legal department before I did that."

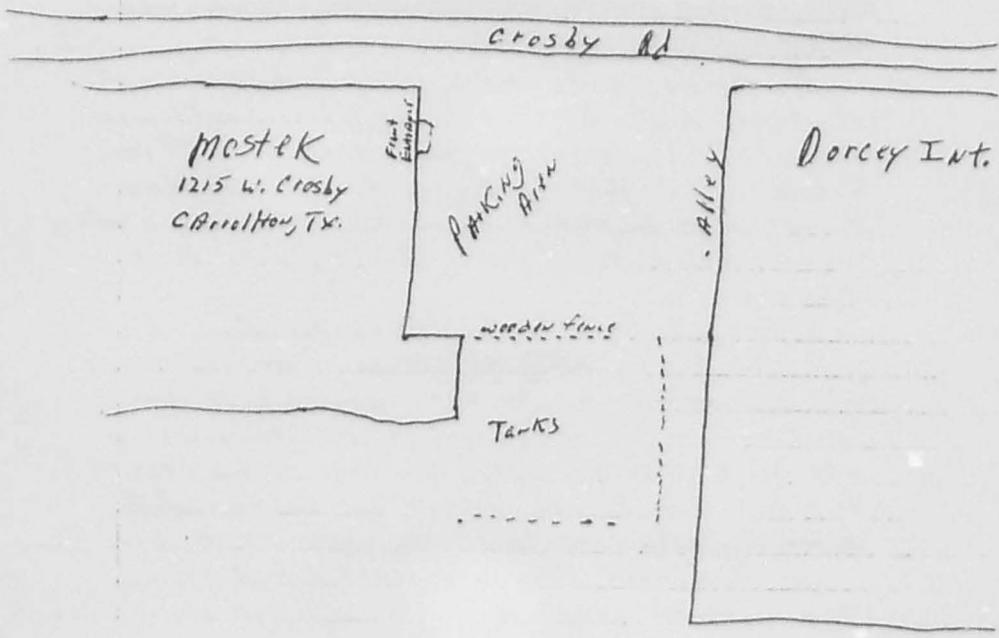
The EPA results were supposed to back today and they were going to tell us how the soil tested. They haven't.

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Interstate  
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I. 35 N to Crosby Rd.  
left on Crosby  
stay in left hand lane  
Turn left in alley immediately past Dorcey Int.

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